
THERE ARE REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES

Gene Sharp

The Albert Einstein Institution

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The Institution is committed to:

- defending democratic freedoms and institutions;
- opposing oppression, dictatorship, and genocide; and
- reducing the reliance on violence as an instrument of policy.

This mission is pursued in three ways, by:

- encouraging research and policy studies on the methods of non-violent action and their past use in diverse conflicts;
- sharing the results of this research with the public through publications, conferences, and the media; and
- consulting with groups in conflict about the strategic potential of nonviolent action.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	1
Developing a Realistic Alternative to War and Other Violence	
The need for a means of waging conflicts	2
There is another technique of struggle	4
Cases of nonviolent struggle	4
Characteristics and methods of nonviolent struggle	7
Misconceptions	9
Requirements for success	9
Repression and political jiu-jitsu	10
Undermining the opponents' power	11
Four ways to success	13
Uses of a refined technique	14
Reducing reliance on war and other violence	15
CHAPTER Two	17
The Importance of Strategic Planning in Nonviolent Struggle	
The importance of strategy	17
Formulating wise strategies	19
Levels of planning and action	20
Some key elements of nonviolent strategy	22
CHAPTER THREE	25
Steps in Strategic Planning for Nonviolent Struggles Against Repressive Regimes	
Elements of strategic planning	26
APPENDIX ONE	31
Glossary of Important Terms in Nonviolent Struggle	

APPENDIX TWO	39
198 Methods of Nonviolent Action	
The Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion	39
The Methods of Noncooperation	
Social Noncooperation	41
Economic Noncooperation: Economic Boycotts	42
Economic Noncooperation: The Strike	43
Political Noncooperation	45
The Methods of Nonviolent Intervention	47
APPENDIX THREE	49
For Further Reading	
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	51
A NOTE ABOUT TRANSLATIONS AND REPRINTING OF THIS PUBLICATION	
	53

CHAPTER ONE

DEVELOPING A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO WAR AND OTHER VIOLENCE

Violence in society and politics, whether in the form of war, terrorism, dictatorship, oppression, usurpation, or genocide, is widely recognized as a grave problem.

All the proposals to solve the problem of violence, or particular expressions of it, have been unsuccessful. It is probable that the problem remains unsolved because such proposals have been based on inadequate understandings of its nature. Without understanding a problem, it is difficult, if not impossible, to solve it.

The objective of this essay is to explore a different perspective on the nature of the problem of widespread violence in society and politics that suggests what will be required for its resolution.¹

We need to analyze the conditions under which it will be possible to reduce drastically the reliance on military and other violent means of conflict. We need to examine why violence is so widely regarded as necessary for good causes as well as for bad ones, and how fundamental change away from that syndrome might be achieved.

The perspective in this essay is simple, but perhaps fundamental to solving the problem of violence in political and international conflicts.

It is important to recognize that conflict in society and politics is inevitable and, in many cases, desirable. Some conflicts can be resolved by mild methods, such as negotiation, dialogue, and conciliation—methods that involve compromise. These are feasible when the issues at stake are not fundamental. Even then, the resolution of a conflict by negotiation is more often influenced by the relative power capacities of the contenders than by reasoned joint assessment of where justice lies.

¹“Violence” is used here with the restricted meaning of physical violence against persons to inflict injury or death, or action dependent on the threat of such results, not as a term of moral or political opinion.

However, in many conflicts fundamental issues are, or are believed to be, at stake. These are “acute conflicts.” They are not deemed suitable for any resolution that involves compromise.

In acute conflicts at least one side regards it as necessary and good to wage the conflict against hostile opponents. Acute conflicts are often believed to be waged to advance freedom, justice, religion, or one’s civilization, or to resist and defeat hostile violence. Hostile violence may be applied to impose oppression, injustice, or dictatorship. Hostile violence also may be applied to attack one’s moral or religious principles or human dignity, or even to threaten the survival of one’s people.

In acute conflicts at least one side regards submission, capitulation, or defeat as disastrous for its principles, convictions, whole society, and at times even to life itself. In such situations, people believe it is necessary to wage the conflict as strongly as possible.

The need for a means of waging conflicts

War and other violence have been applied for diverse purposes, but in acute conflicts political and international violence has served as a means of waging the conflict to protect and advance causes believed to be good and noble. Violence has been believed to be the necessary alternative to passive submission to great evil.

In most political systems, war and other violence serve as an “ultimate sanction.” That is, forms of violence are believed to be the means of last resort, the most powerful activity that can be applied, the final means of applying pressure, punishment, or power when all presumably milder means are seen to have failed, or to be destined to fail. Violence is used then, it is believed, to advance and defend all that is held to be good and worthwhile.

Unless this role of violence is understood, there is no possibility of a major reduction of reliance on war and other violence in acute conflicts.

In conflicts with basic issues at stake it is naïve to think and act as though the offer of negotiation or dialogue is an adequate response. Hostile opponents are most unlikely to abandon their goals

or means without a struggle. It is unreasonable to aim for a “win-win” resolution. Brutal dictators and perpetrators of genocide do not deserve to win anything.

We have many decades of evidence that violence in the conduct of conflicts is not eliminated by protests against such violence. In acute conflicts, the majority of people will not reject war and other violence because they believe, or are told, that such violence violates ethical or religious principles. Adherence to expectations to the contrary is unrealistic.

It has been nearly forty years since psychiatrist Jerome D. Frank reminded us that for most people peace is not the highest value.²

People, groups, and governments will not renounce violence when that is seen to mean becoming powerless and helpless in a conflict in which their basic beliefs and the nature of their society are, or are believed to be, under attack.

In acute conflicts in order for war and other violence not to be used as the final means of action to advance or defend one's principles, ideals, society, or existence, some other means of strong action need to be available. There has to be a substitute means of conducting the conflict powerfully with the chance of success equivalent to or greater than the violent option.

Of necessity, such a functional alternative must be able to deal satisfactorily with the “hard cases” for which violence has in the past been believed to be required. These “hard cases” include conflicts against dictatorships, foreign invasions and occupations, internal usurpations, oppression, attempted genocide, and mass expulsions and killings.

A very important clue that such an alternative is possible lies in the fact that the strength of even dictatorships is dependent on sources of power in the society, which in turn depend on the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people—cooperation which may or may not continue, as we shall see later in more detail.

²Jerome D. Frank, “Psychological Problems in the Elimination of War” in *Preventing World War III: Some Proposals*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962.

There is another technique of struggle

Such a substitute for violent conflict is a realistic option. It is often forgot that war and other violence have not been universal in the conduct of acute conflicts. In a great variety of situations, across centuries and cultural barriers, another technique of struggle has at times been applied. This other technique has not been based on turning the other cheek, but on the ability to be stubborn and to resist powerful opponents powerfully.

Throughout human history, in a multitude of conflicts one side has fought—not by violence, but—by psychological, social, economic, or political methods, or a combination of these. This type of conflict has been waged not only when the issues were relatively limited and the opponents relatively decent. Many times this alternative form of struggle has been applied when fundamental issues have been at stake and when ruthless opponents have been willing and able to apply extreme repression. That repression has included executions, beatings, arrests, imprisonments, and mass slaughters. Despite such repression, when the resisters have persisted in fighting with only their chosen nonviolent weapons, they have sometimes triumphed.

This technique is called nonviolent action or nonviolent struggle. This is “the other ultimate sanction.” In acute conflicts it potentially can serve as an alternative to war and other violence.

Cases of nonviolent struggle

Nonviolent struggle has occurred in widely differing cultures, periods of history, and political conditions. It has occurred in "the West" and in "the East." Nonviolent action has occurred in industrialized and nonindustrialized countries. It has been practiced under constitutional democracies and against empires, foreign occupations, and dictatorial systems. Nonviolent struggle has been waged on behalf of a myriad of causes and groups, and even for objectives that many people reject. It has also been used to prevent, as well as to promote, change. Its use has sometimes been mixed with limited violence.

The issues at stake have been diverse. They have included social, economic, ethnic, religious, national, humanitarian, and political matters, and have ranged from the trivial to the fundamental.

Although historians have generally neglected this type of struggle, it is clearly a very old phenomenon. Most of the history of this technique has doubtless been lost, and most of what has survived has been largely ignored.

Many cases of the use of nonviolent action have had little or nothing to do with governments. Cases include labor-management conflicts and efforts to impose or resist pressures for social conformity. Nonviolent action has also been used in ethnic and religious conflicts and many other situations, such as disputes between students and university administrations. Important conflicts between the civilian population and governments where one side has employed nonviolent action have also occurred very widely. The following examples are often of this type.

From the late eighteenth century through the twentieth century, the technique of nonviolent action was widely used in highly diverse conflicts: colonial rebellions, international political and economic conflicts, religious conflicts, and anti-slavery resistance. This technique has been aimed to secure workers' right to organize, women's rights, universal manhood suffrage, and woman suffrage. This type of struggle has been used to gain national independence, to generate economic gains, to resist genocide, to undermine dictatorships, to gain civil rights, to end segregation, and to resist foreign occupations and coups d'état.

Cases of the use of this technique early in the twentieth century included major elements of the Russian 1905 Revolution. In various countries the growing trade unions widely used the strike and the economic boycott. Chinese boycotts of Japanese products occurred in 1908, 1915, and 1919. Germans used nonviolent action against the Kapp Putsch in 1920 and against the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in 1923. In the 1920s and 1930s, Indian nationalists used nonviolent action in their struggles against British rule, under the leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi.

From 1940 to 1945 in various European countries people, especially in Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands, used nonviolent struggle to resist Nazi occupation and rule. Nonviolent action was used to save Jews from the Holocaust in Berlin, Bulgaria, Denmark, and elsewhere. The military dictators of El Salvador and Guatemala were ousted in brief nonviolent struggles in the spring of 1944. The American civil rights nonviolent struggles against racial segregation, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, changed laws and long-established policies in the US South. In April 1961 noncooperation by French conscript soldiers in the French colony of Algeria combined with popular demonstrations in France and defiance by the Debré-de Gaulle government defeated the coup d'état in Algiers before a related coup in Paris could be launched.

In 1968 and 1969, following the Warsaw Pact invasion, Czechs and Slovaks held off full Soviet control for eight months with improvised nonviolent struggle and refusal of collaboration. From 1953 to 1990 dissidents in Communist-ruled countries in Eastern Europe, especially in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic States, repeatedly used nonviolent struggles for increased freedom. The sophisticated Solidarity struggle in Poland began in 1980 with strikes to support the demand of a legal free trade union, and concluded in 1989 with the end of the Polish Communist regime. Nonviolent struggle also brought about the end of Communist dictatorships in Czechoslovakia in 1989 and in East Germany, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1991.

The attempted "hard-line" coup d'état in Moscow in 1991 was defeated by noncooperation and defiance. Nonviolent protests and mass resistance were highly important in undermining the *Apartheid* policies and European domination in South Africa, especially between 1950 and 1990. The Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines was destroyed by a nonviolent uprising in 1986.

In July and August 1988 Burmese democrats protested against the military dictatorship with marches and defiance, brought down three governments, and finally that struggle succumbed to a new military coup d'état and mass slaughter. In 1989 Chinese students and others in over three hundred cities (including in Tiananmen

Square, Beijing) conducted symbolic protests against government corruption and oppression, but the protests finally ended following massive killings by the military.

In Kosovo the Albanian population between 1990 and 1999 conducted a noncooperation campaign against repressive Serbian rule. When the de facto Kosovo government lacked a nonviolent strategy for gaining de jure independence, a guerrilla Kosovo Liberation Army initiated violence. This was followed by extreme Serbian repression and massive slaughters by so-called “ethnic cleansing,” which led to NATO bombing and intervention.

Starting in November 1996 Serbs conducted daily parades and protests in Belgrade and other cities against the autocratic governance of President Milosovic and secured correction of electoral fraud in mid-January 1997. At that time, however, Serb democrats lacked a strategy to press on the struggle and failed to launch a campaign to bring down the Milosovic dictatorship. In early October 2000, the Otpor (Resistance) movement and other democrats rose up again against Milosovic in a carefully planned nonviolent struggle and the dictatorship collapsed.

In early 2001 President Estrada, who had been accused of corruption, was ousted by Filipinos in a “People Power Two” campaign.

In order to understand better those conflicts and their outcomes it is important to understand the nature of this technique.

Characteristics and methods of nonviolent struggle

In this type of struggle, instead of using violence people have practiced three general types of behavior. First, they have engaged in symbolic protests, such as marches, vigils, distributing leaflets, or wearing of specific colors to communicate their support for, or opposition to, some objective.

Second, the resisters have refused to continue existing cooperation, or to begin new cooperation, with the opponents or with certain practices. They have practiced noncooperation. This has taken social, economic, and political forms.

For example, the resisters have practiced social boycotts of opponents or have refused to participate in observances or celebrations, or to attend meetings or schools that they believe support their opponents.

The resisters have at times discontinued economic cooperation by refusing to supply or transport goods and services or by refusing to buy or sell materials or products. Sometimes economic relations with an opponent country have been halted by government initiative. These all have been forms of economic boycott.

Labor strikes have taken various forms, such as a short symbolic work stoppage, a single factory strike, a massive general strike, or an economic shut-down of a city or a country.

Political noncooperation has included boycotts of rigged elections, rejection of the legitimacy of a regime, nonobedience without direct supervision, noncooperation by government employees, and civil disobedience of "immoral" laws.

Third, active intervention and disruption of the normal operation of the system has been applied in various psychological, social, economic, physical, and political forms. The many methods of non-violent intervention include occupation of offices, sit-downs on the streets, hunger strikes, establishment of new economic institutions, nonviolent invasions, overloading of administrative facilities, seeking imprisonment, and parallel government.

The methods of nonviolent action are identified and categorized by the type of action applied, not by the motives or beliefs of the people applying it. Very importantly, this technique has been applied by people of diverse beliefs and clearly does not require a belief in ethical or religious nonviolence, which is a very different phenomenon. Most often, the participants and the leaders (if identifiable) have refrained from violence because it was understood to be both unnecessary and counterproductive. The 198 classified methods of nonviolent action are listed in Appendix Two, and presented in full with historical examples in Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. (See Appendix Three: For Further Reading).

Misconceptions

A widespread series of false conceptions and misperceptions have plagued the understanding of nonviolent struggle. The following are some corrections:

- It is widely believed that violence always works quickly, and nonviolent struggle always takes very long. Both of these beliefs are false.
- Nonviolent struggle is often believed to be weak, but in fact it can be very powerful. It can paralyze and even disintegrate a repressive regime.
- Nonviolent struggle does not need a charismatic leader.
- Nonviolent struggle is a cross-cultural phenomenon.
- Nonviolent struggle does not require any religious beliefs (certainly no specific religious beliefs), although at times it has been practiced with religious motives.
- Nonviolent struggle is not the same as religious or ethical principled nonviolence, but a very different phenomenon. This distinction must be made clear and not downplayed.
- Although it is still widely believed that this technique can succeed only against humanitarian and democratic opponents, it has at times been successful against brutal regimes and dictatorships, including Nazi and Communist ones.
- It is said by some persons and groups that nonviolent struggle only succeeds by melting the hearts of the oppressors. However, it has been coercive and even destroyed extreme dictatorships.

Requirements for success

The choice to use this type of struggle is not a guarantee of success, just as the use of violence is not a guarantee of success. There are requirements for achieving success with this technique, just as there are with violence. Simply refraining from violence and speaking the word “nonviolent” does not produce the desired results.

Some of the past instances of nonviolent action failed to accomplish their objectives. Some won only limited victories. Sometimes a victory was short-lived because people did not then use it to consolidate and perhaps institutionalize their gains, nor did they effectively resist new threats to their liberty. In other instances, victory in a single campaign won concessions, but new struggles were required to achieve the full objectives.

In some cases, however, major victories were achieved that would have been impossible by resistance with violence. In order to better understand these outcomes, it is necessary to understand the nature of this technique.

Although the ways nonviolent struggle “works” differ widely from case to case, it is important to identify two crucial special processes that may be present in certain nonviolent conflicts, but not in every one. These are: (1) an ability to defy and at times to reverse the effects of repression, and (2) an ability to undermine and sever the sources of power of the opponents.

Repression and political jiu-jitsu

Naturally, dictators are sensitive to actions and ideas that threaten their power to do as they like. Oppressors are therefore likely to threaten and punish those who disobey, strike, or refuse to cooperate. However, repression and even brutalities do not always produce a resumption of the necessary degree of submission and cooperation to enable the regime to function.

Under some circumstances, but not in every case, severe repression may initiate a special process called “political jiu-jitsu.”

The opponents’ difficulties in dealing with nonviolent action are primarily associated with the special dynamics and processes of this technique. It is designed to operate against opponents able and willing to use violent sanctions. However, political struggle by means of nonviolent action against violent repression creates a special, asymmetrical, conflict situation. The nonviolent resisters can use the asymmetry of nonviolent means versus violent action in order

to apply to their opponents a political operation analogous to the Japanese martial art of jiu-jitsu. The contrast in types of action throws the opponents off balance politically, causing their repression to rebound against their position and weaken their power. By remaining nonviolent while continuing the struggle, the resisters will improve their own power position. This process is called political jiu-jitsu.

Political jiu-jitsu causes increased alienation from the opponents by any or all of three possible groups: members of the opponent group itself, members of the population affected by the issues, and third parties not directly involved in the conflict. That alienation can result in the growth of internal opposition in the opponents' camp. It can also increase the numbers of resisters and the extent of resistance. It also often turns third parties against the opponents and in favor of the resisters.

Undermining the opponents' power

Political jiu-jitsu does not operate in all situations or in every case of nonviolent action. The other major way nonviolent struggle operates is through undermining the sources of power required by the opponents, even dictatorships. This process operates primarily in struggles when the objective is to pressure or coerce a government to do or not to do something, or when the objective is to disintegrate the regime.

The principle is simple. Dictators require the assistance of the people they rule, without which they cannot secure and maintain the sources of political power they require. These sources of political power include:

- **Authority, or legitimacy;**
- **Human resources,** the persons and groups that obey, cooperate with, or assist the rulers;
- **Skills and knowledge,** needed by the regime and supplied by the cooperating persons and groups;

- **Intangible factors**, psychological and ideological factors which may induce people to obey and assist the rulers;
- **Material resources**, control of or access to property, natural resources, financial resources, the economic system, and means of communication and transportation; and
- **Sanctions**, punishments, threatened or applied, to ensure the submission and cooperation that are needed for the regime to carry out its policies and to exist.

All these sources, however, depend on acceptance of the regime, on the submission and obedience of the population, and on the cooperation of many people and institutions of the society.

Political power, therefore, is always dependent for its strength and existence upon a replenishment of its sources by the cooperation of a multitude of institutions and people—cooperation that may or may not continue. Political power is therefore always potentially fragile and is always dependent on the society over which it is applied.

This necessary submission and cooperation are not guaranteed, and each source of power is vulnerable to restrictions or losses. Nonviolent action can be directly targeted to strike at the availability of each of these sources. Depending on several factors, the supply of all these sources of power potentially can be weakened and even severed.

Noncooperation and defiance subvert the needed obedience and cooperation that supply the necessary sources of power. For example, rejection of the rulers' legitimacy reduces a crucial reason for obedience by both aides and the general populace. Extensive popular disobedience and defiance creates immense enforcement problems. Massive strikes can paralyze the economy. Widespread administrative noncooperation of the bureaucracy can thwart governmental operations. Mutinies of the opponents' police and troops can dissolve the opponents' capacity to repress nonviolent resisters and to maintain their regime.

Without availability of those sources of power, the opponents' power weakens and finally dissolves. The regime dies from political starvation.

Contrary to popular opinion, even totalitarian dictatorships are dependent on the support of the population and the societies they rule, as the political scientist Karl. W. Deutsch noted in 1953.³

Four ways to success

Successful nonviolent struggles have "worked" in four basic ways. These differing ways of operation depend to a high degree on the specific conflict situation, the issues at stake, the social structure of the resisting population, the nature of the opponents, the chosen grand strategy (if any), the preferred mechanism of change, the specific methods used, and the skill, discipline, and tenacity of the resisters. The pressures exerted may be psychological, social, economic, and political, each in varying degrees.

Additionally, the nonviolent struggle may affect the stability of the social or political system or may change its operation. The struggle also may affect the opponents' ability to continue specific policies. In certain conflicts nonviolent noncooperation and defiance may undermine the opponents' capacity to continue to govern, or may even disintegrate their regime.

There are major differences in how nonviolent struggle operates in different conflicts. For example, the dynamics in a local labor strike for increased wages will differ from those in a conflict conducted by a minority group for greater rights, or those of a struggle to destroy a dictatorship.

In cases of success, the change may come as a result of one of four mechanisms. Rarely, as a result of nonviolent struggle, changes of attitude have led the opponents to make concessions voluntarily because it is right to do so—*conversion*. Far more often, the withdrawal of economic or political cooperation has forced the opponents

³Karl W. Deutsch, "Cracks in the Monolith: Possibilities and Patterns of Disintegration in Totalitarian Systems," in Carl. J. Friedrich, ed., *Totalitarianism*, pp. 308-333. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954.

to agree to a compromise—*accommodation*. At times the defiance and noncooperation have been so strong and so skillfully targeted, and the sources of the opponents' power have been sufficiently weakened that the opponents have been left with no option but to capitulate—*nonviolent coercion*. In some rare instances, the defiance and noncooperation have been so massive, and the severance of the sources of the opponents' power has been so complete, that the regime has simply fallen apart—*disintegration*.

Uses of a refined technique

Whether or not this technique of nonviolent struggle is, or can be made to be, a major contribution to the resolution of the problem of violence in society and politics hinges to a high degree on if it can help to reduce reliance on violence in acute conflicts. Can it be made sufficiently effective so as to be used in acute conflicts in place of violence? In some cases the answer offered by some persons may be a clear "yes," but in other cases the answer may be "perhaps," "doubtful," or "no." Those answers will likely depend upon the degree of understanding those persons have of this technique and the degree to which nonviolent struggle is judged capable of providing an effective substitute for violence in acute conflicts.

It is possible to learn how to make this type of struggle more effective than it has been in its past improvised applications. This can be done by increasing our knowledge of the requirements of this technique, spreading widely this knowledge and understanding, and increasing general and specific planning and strategy for the use of this technique in future acute conflicts.

The development of a satisfactory solution to the problem of violence, and the examination of the future political development of nonviolent struggle, require that we give attention to the present and potential future role of this technique. This is especially important in those acute conflicts in which many people and governments believe that military means and other violence are required. The questions are: to what extent we can understand and refine this technique, and how far can it be effectively substituted for violence?

The future political development of nonviolent struggle needs to include nonviolent alternatives to violence in the following types of conflicts:

- Dismantling dictatorships;
- Blocking new coups d'état and preventing new dictatorships;
- Defending against foreign aggression and occupation;
- Preserving the existence and ways of life of indigenous peoples;
- Lifting social and economic injustices;
- Developing, preserving and extending democratic practices and human rights; and
- Incorporating in additional ways nonviolent means into democratic societies.

Reducing reliance on war and other violence

For these and other general purposes, and for specific conflicts, practical strategic plans need to be developed to enable the nonviolent option to be effectively applied. As this is done incrementally, it will be possible in instance after instance to substitute refined non-violent struggle for the use of violence in acute conflicts.

In order to meet this challenge—to explore and develop the potential of nonviolent action to address acute conflicts—a great deal more research, analysis, strategic studies, policy development, planning, and courageous action is required.

The tools of historians, social psychologists, sociologists, social and political theorists, political scientists, strategists, and others are needed. It is important not only to study nonviolent struggle, but also to examine other topics, including the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of dictatorships and other systems of oppression.

It is also important to learn how to develop and spread the capacity to think strategically and to plan strategies for future non-violent struggles.

The application of these efforts will require going beyond, and often against, important established trends of modern society and

powerful national and international forces. The centralization of power, the militarization of inter-state politics, the hegemony of traditional methods of problem solving, these and other factors work against reasoned consideration of the potential relevance of nonviolent struggle.

However, there are grounds to suggest that whether a society chooses to rely ultimately on violent or nonviolent struggle in certain acute conflicts has highly important consequences for the social and political structure. It strongly appears that violent conflict tends to produce a more centralized and potentially repressive political system, whereas nonviolent conflict tends to produce a more decentralized and popularly controlled political system. Military capacity can be used internally to repress the population, while nonviolent struggle can be used by the population to achieve and defend freedoms and to resist centralized repression.

Careful informed consideration of the potential relevance and viability of means of applying nonviolent pressures and power is likely to reveal realistic options that have hitherto been inadequately explored. This approach has the potential for making fundamental changes in modern politics and international relations through reducing reliance upon violence.

How much we will succeed in replacing violent with nonviolent forms of conflict, thereby reducing drastically the reliance on military and other violent means, will to a very high degree be determined by the extent to which we can develop and apply effective nonviolent alternatives of conflict.

The unavoidable question is whether we are now going to attempt to refine this technique and adapt and adopt it for use in conflicts to challenge, replace, and remove extreme expressions of violence by effective and powerful action.

CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPORTANCE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE

The use of strategy is best known in military conflict. For centuries military officers have engaged in strategic planning for military campaigns, and important thinkers such as Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Liddell Hart have analyzed and refined military strategy. In conventional military warfare and in guerrilla warfare, the use of sophisticated strategy is a basic requirement for effectiveness.

Just as effective military struggle requires wise strategies, planning, and implementation, nonviolent action will be most effective when it also operates on the basis of sound strategic planning. The formulation and adoption of wise strategies can greatly increase the power of nonviolent struggle.

The importance of strategy

If one wishes to accomplish something, the chances of achieving that goal will be greatest if one uses one's available resources and leverage to maximum effectiveness. That means having a strategic plan that is designed to move from the present (in which the goal is not achieved) to the future (in which it is achieved). Strategy pertains to charting the course of action that makes it most likely to get from the present to a desired situation in the future.

For example, if one wants to travel from one place to another, one needs to plan in advance how to do so. Will one walk? Take a train? Drive a car? Fly? Even then the plan is far from complete. Does one have the money to pay for the cost of the trip and other expenses? If the trip is a long one, where will one sleep and eat? Are travel documents, passports, or visas required, and if so how will one obtain them? Are there matters to be arranged to cover one's absence during the trip?

This type of thinking and planning which some individuals undertake for ordinary purposes in daily life, should be undertaken

by leaders of social and political movements. Unfortunately, however, strategic planning is rarely given the attention it deserves with such movements.

Some people naively think that if they simply assert their goal strongly and firmly enough, long enough, it will somehow come to pass. Others assume that if they remain true to their principles and ideals and witness to them in the face of adversity, then they are doing all they can to help to achieve them. Assertion of desirable goals and remaining loyal to ideals are admirable, but are in themselves grossly inadequate to change the status quo and bring into being designated goals.

Of course seeking to change a society, or to prevent changes in a society, or to remove a foreign occupation, or to defend a society from attack, are all far more complicated tasks than planning a trip. Yet only rarely do people seeking such objectives fully recognize the extreme importance of preparing a comprehensive strategic plan before they act.

Very often in social and political movements, the individuals and groups involved recognize that they need to plan how they are to act, but do so only on a very limited, short-term, or tactical, basis. They do not attempt to formulate a broader, longer-term, or strategic plan of action. They may not see it to be necessary. They may at the time be unable to think and analyze in those terms. Or, they may allow themselves to be repeatedly distracted from their larger goal by focusing continually on small issues, repeatedly responding to the opponents' initiatives, and acting feverishly on short-term activities. They may not allocate time and energy to planning a strategy, or exploring several alternative strategies, which could guide their overall efforts toward achieving their goal.

Sometimes, too, it must be admitted, people do not attempt to chart a strategy to achieve their goal, because deep down they do not really believe that achieving their goal is possible. They see themselves as weak, as helpless victims of overpowering forces, so the best they can do, they believe, is to assert and witness, or even die, in the faith that they are right. Consequently, they do not attempt to think and plan strategically to accomplish their objective.

The result of such failures to plan strategically is that the chances of success are drastically reduced, and at times eliminated. One's strength is dissipated. One's actions are ineffective. Sacrifices are wasted and one's cause is not well served. The failure to plan strategically is likely to result in the failure to achieve one's objectives.

Without the formulation of a careful strategic plan of action:

- one's energy can be deflected to minor issues and applied ineffectively;
- opportunities for advancing one's cause will go unutilized;
- the opponents' initiatives will determine the course of events;
- the weaknesses of one's own side will grow and have detrimental effects on the attempt to achieve the goal; and
- the efforts to reach the goal will have very little chance of being successful.

On the contrary, the formulation and adoption of brilliant strategies increase the chances of success. Directed action in accordance with a strategic plan enables one to concentrate one's strengths and actions to move in a determined direction toward the desired goal. They can be focused to serve the main objectives and to aggravate the opponents' weaknesses. Casualties and other costs may be reduced and sacrifices may serve the main goal more effectively. The chances of the nonviolent campaign succeeding are increased.

Formulating wise strategies

The selection, or formulation, of a wise strategy requires:

- an accurate sense of the whole context in which the struggle is to be waged;
- identification of the nature of the difference between where one is and where one wants to be;
- assessment of the impediments to achieving the goal and the factors that may facilitate the task;
- assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of one's oppo-

nents, of one's own group, and of third parties which may assist or hinder the campaign;

- evaluation of the merits and limitations of several potential courses of action one might follow;
- selection of a viable course among existing options or the charting of a completely new one; and
- identification of an overall plan of action which determines what smaller (tactical) plans and specific methods of action should be used in pursuit of the main goal (i.e., what specific localized or shorter-term activities or steps should be taken to implement the overall strategic plan).

Levels of planning and action

In developing a strategic plan one needs to understand that there are different levels of planning and action. At the highest level is grand strategy. Then there is strategy itself, followed by tactics and methods.

Grand strategy is the overall conception which serves to coordinate and direct all appropriate and available resources (economic, human, moral, political, organizational, etc.) of the nation or other group to attain its objectives in a conflict.

Grand strategy includes consideration of the rightness of the cause, assessment of other influences in the situation, and selection of the technique of action to be used (for example, nonviolent struggle, conventional politics, guerrilla warfare, or conventional warfare), how the objective will be achieved, and the long-term consequences.

Grand strategy sets the basic framework for the selection of more limited strategies for waging the struggle. This level of planning also includes the allocation of general tasks to particular groups and the distribution of resources to them for use in the struggle. Furthermore, it includes consideration of how the struggle itself relates to the achievement of the objectives for which the conflict is waged.

Strategy is the conception of how best to achieve objectives in a conflict (violent or nonviolent). Strategy is concerned with whether, when, or how to fight, and how to achieve maximum effectiveness in order to gain certain ends. Strategy is the plan for the practical distribution, adaptation, and application of the available means to attain desired objectives.

Strategy may also include efforts to develop a strategic situation so advantageous that it may bring success without open struggle. Applied to the struggle itself, strategy is the basic idea of how the campaign shall develop, and how its separate components shall be fitted together most advantageously to achieve its objectives.

Strategy involves consideration of the results likely to follow from particular actions; the development of a broad plan of actions; the skillful determination of the deployment of conflict groups in smaller actions; consideration of the requirements for success in the operation of the chosen technique; and making good use of success.

Strategy operates within the scope of grand strategy. Tactics and methods of action are used to implement the strategy. To be most effective, the tactics and methods must be chosen and applied so that they really assist the application of the strategy and contribute to achieving the requirements for success.

In formulating strategy in nonviolent struggle, the following aspects are to be taken into account: one's own objectives, resources and strength; the opponents' objectives, resources, and strength; the actual and possible roles of third parties; the opponents' various possible courses and means of action; one's own various possible courses and means of action (both offensive and defensive); the requirements for success with this technique, its dynamics of action, and its mechanisms of change.

A *tactic* is a limited plan of action, based on a conception of how best to utilize the available means of fighting to achieve a restricted objective as part of the wider strategy. A tactic is concerned with a limited course of action which fits within the broad strategy, just as a strategy fits within the grand strategy. A particular tactic can only be understood as part of the overall strategy of a battle or a campaign.

Tactics deal with how particular methods of action are applied, or how particular groups of combatants shall act in a specific situation. Tactics are applied for shorter periods of time than strategies, or in smaller areas (geographical, institutional, etc.), or by a more limited number of people, or for more limited objectives, or in some combination of these.

Method refers to the specific means of action within the technique of nonviolent struggle. These include dozens of particular forms of action, such as the many kinds of strikes, boycotts, political noncooperation and the like. (For a listing of 198 methods of non-violent action that have been used in historical instances, see Appendix Two.)

The development of a responsible and effective strategic plan for a nonviolent struggle depends upon the careful formulation and selection of grand strategy, strategies, tactics, and methods.

Some key elements of nonviolent strategy

There is no single strategy for the use of nonviolent struggle that is appropriate for all occasions. Indeed, the technique of nonviolent action makes possible the development of a variety of strategies for meeting various types of conflict situations. Additionally, nonviolent struggle may often need to be combined in a grand strategy with the use of other means of action.

This does not mean that nonviolent struggle is compatible with all other techniques of action. For example, the use of violence along with nonviolent struggle destroys various processes by which non-violent struggle operates, and thereby contributes to its ineffectiveness at best and its collapse or defeat at worst.

However, it is fairly obvious that such means as fact-finding, publicity, public education, appeals to the opponents, negotiations, and the like could beneficially in many situations be used in connection with the use of nonviolent struggle. These means are often used in connection with economic boycotts and labor strikes, for example.

Essential to the planning of nonviolent struggle campaigns is a basic principle: Plan your struggle so that the success of the conflict

becomes possible by reliance on yourselves alone. This was Charles Stewart Parnell's message to Irish peasants during a rent strike of 1879-1880: "rely on yourselves," and not on anyone else.

Assuming that a strong nonviolent struggle is planned and being waged, it is fine to seek limited and nonviolent assistance from others, but winning the struggle must depend on one's own group. Then, if no one else provides help, assuming that the strategic planning has been sound, one still has a chance to succeed. However, if the responsibility for success and failure has been given to others, when they do not come forward the struggle will fail. In any case, responsible external support is more likely to be forthcoming when a strong nonviolent struggle is being conducted by the aggrieved population, acting correctly as though success or failure will be determined by its efforts only.

The formulation of wise strategies and tactics for nonviolent struggles requires a thorough understanding of the dynamics and mechanisms of nonviolent struggle, such as is presented in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. (See Appendix Three: For Further Reading). It is necessary to be attentive to the development of those plans and actions that facilitate their operation and to reject those that, if implemented, would disrupt the very factors that can contribute to effectiveness.

Attention will also be needed to such additional factors as psychological elements and morale, geographical and physical elements, timing, numbers and strength, the relation between the issue and the concentration of strength, maintenance of the initiative, and the choice of specific methods of action that can contribute to achieving the objectives of the strategy and tactics.

The importance of strategic planning for nonviolent struggle cannot be overemphasized. It is the key to making social and political movements more effective. It may not guarantee that a movement will achieve its objectives, but it will certainly make the possibility of success more likely.⁴

⁴For guidance on how to plan strategies for future nonviolent struggles, see Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential*. Forthcoming.

CHAPTER THREE

STEPS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR NONVIOLENT STRUGGLES AGAINST REPRESSIVE REGIMES

Nonviolent struggle is a technique for conducting conflicts by social, psychological, economic, and political methods of protest, non-cooperation, and disruptive intervention.

It is a technique built on the social, economic, and political application of basic human stubbornness—the determination and ability to dissent, to refuse to cooperate, to defy, and to disrupt. In other words, people may refuse to do things they are asked to do, and may do what they are forbidden to do.

All governments rely on cooperation and obedience for their very existence. When people choose to withhold or withdraw that cooperation, governments are left without any pillars to support their weight.

Nonviolent struggle has been applied in various types of conflicts throughout human history to resist oppression, undermine dictatorships, oppose foreign occupations, defend detested minorities, and to expand freedom.

Such struggles in the past have largely been the result of intuition, chance events, improvisation, and people acting without clearly identifying their objectives, or without understanding what was really required to achieve them.

Some of these struggles displayed a degree of tactical (or short-term) planning, but very few operated under grand strategic plans for the development and conduct of the overall struggle.

Now, groups engaged in nonviolent struggle no longer need to re-invent the wheel. Through deeper understanding of this technique, the sharing of this knowledge, and the use of strategic, or long-term, planning, nonviolent struggle is becoming more effective.

Elements of strategic planning

The following are some of the key elements requiring attention when planning a nonviolent struggle:

Phase I: Initial assessment and analysis

- Examine the issues at stake as seen by both sides.
- Prepare an analysis of the cultural, political, and socio-economic systems present in the society or country, as well as the population distribution.
- Prepare a strategic estimate⁵, meaning: identify the strengths and weaknesses of both sides to the conflict. This includes identification of the sources of power for the contending sides and the institutions that serve as their pillars of support, an analysis of resources available to or controlled by each side, an examination of the degrees of dependency each side has on the other for meeting particular needs, and the relative struggle power of the two sides.
- Identify which of the opponents' sources of power can be best targeted to be weakened or removed.
- Identify and examine the potential roles and attitudes of third parties to the conflict, including the "non-committed" population-at-large.
- Identify other external factors affecting possible courses of action: geography, weather, climate, infrastructure, etc.
- Identify what other kinds of pressures may lead to gaining the resisters' objectives.
- Examine the above factors to identify whether existing conditions are favorable or unfavorable to conducting a nonviolent struggle within a particular timeframe. Which of those conditions are "fixed," which are variable, and which can be directly influenced by the actions of the resisters or their adversaries?

⁵This term and concept was introduced to the field of strategic nonviolent action by Robert Helvey.

Phase II: Strategy development

- Develop a grand strategy for the overall conflict. Identify the objective of the struggle in clear, specific terms. Calculate in general terms how the nonviolent struggle should operate in order to achieve that objective. This is the broad, long-term, master concept for the conduct of the struggle, coordinating and directing all appropriate and available resources of the struggle group.
- Can the primary objective of the conflict be achieved in a single all-out campaign? If so, plan how to do that. If not, the struggle will need to be deliberately phased to include more limited campaigns for secondary but important objectives.
- Develop strategies for individual campaigns for more limited objectives to be obtained during the course of struggle. This is where the broad framework of the grand strategy becomes more detailed, to answer the who, what, where, when, and how in the planning of a particular campaign in the conflict.
- Select specific short-term tactics and individual methods of action that will implement the chosen strategy. It is very important to select tactics and methods carefully within the framework of a particular strategic campaign, and only after one has developed a grand strategy. Nonviolent methods that can be selected include those of protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and intervention. Some will work better than others in different situations, depending largely on the grand strategy and overall objective, the strategic estimate, and the objective of the individual campaign. Some methods will be more capable than others of restricting and severing the regime's sources of power.
- Ensure that the adopted strategic plan is harmonious in its objective, types of pressures to be applied, and selected tactics and methods.

Phase III: Capacity building

- Ensure that the selected strategies for the struggle are within the capacity of the population to implement. If they are not, deliberate efforts will be needed to strengthen the population's capacity. Or, the strategies will need to be modified.
- Strengthen organizations and institutions that are outside the opponents' control, especially if the grand strategy calls for using these independent bodies during the struggle for applying noncooperation and defiance.
- Plan for third-party assistance, but do not rely on it.

Phase IV: Open struggle

- Concentrate the resisters' strengths against the opponents' weaknesses to gain selected objectives according to the grand strategy, strategy, and selected methods, especially in restricting and severing the opponents' sources of power.
- Ensure that the strategic plan is applied in a disciplined way without violence that will weaken the resistance.
- Ensure that the struggle activities help to empower the resisters.
- Ensure the resisters' access to critical resources.
- Keep the opponents off-balance.
- Defy the opponents' repression but stick to one's own forms of struggle.
- Act, rather than react. Maintain the initiative and momentum. The struggle should be conducted on the terms of the resistance group, not the opponents.
- Continuously re-assess and evaluate the conduct of the struggle according to the strategic plan.

Phase V: Conclusion of the conflict

- Success, failure, or mixed results?
- Conduct a post-conflict assessment and plan for the future.

These are only elementary notes for the application of strategic non-violent struggle.⁶

⁶For more detailed recommendations for strategic planning, see Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential*. Forthcoming.

APPENDIX ONE

GLOSSARY OF IMPORTANT TERMS

IN NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE

Accommodation: A mechanism of change in nonviolent action in which the opponents resolve, while they still have a choice, to agree to a compromise and grant certain demands of the nonviolent resisters. Accommodation occurs when the opponents have neither changed their views nor been nonviolently coerced, but have concluded that a compromise settlement is desirable.

The accommodation may result from influences that, if continued, might have led to the conversion, nonviolent coercion, or disintegration of the opponents' system or regime.

Authority: The quality that leads the judgments, decisions, recommendations, and orders of certain individuals and institutions to be accepted voluntarily as right and therefore to be implemented by others through obedience or cooperation. Authority is a main source of political power, but is not identical with it.

Boycott: Noncooperation, either socially, economically, or politically.

Civic abstention: A synonym for acts of political noncooperation.

Civic action: A synonym for nonviolent action conducted for political purposes.

Civic defiance: Assertive acts of nonviolent protest, resistance or intervention conducted for political purposes.

Civic resistance: A synonym for nonviolent resistance with a political objective.

Civic strike: An economic shut-down conducted for political reasons. Not only workers may go on strike, but importantly students,

professionals, shopkeepers, white-collar workers (including government employees), and members of upper classes may participate.

Civil disobedience: A deliberate peaceful violation of particular laws, decrees, regulations, ordinances, military or police orders, and the like.

These are usually laws that are regarded as inherently immoral, unjust, or tyrannical. Sometimes, however, laws of a largely regulatory or morally neutral character may be disobeyed as a symbol of opposition to wider policies of the government.

Conversion: A change of viewpoint by the opponents against whom nonviolent action has been waged, such that they come to believe it is right to accept the objectives of the nonviolent group. This is one of four mechanisms of change in nonviolent action.

Disintegration: The fourth mechanism of change in nonviolent action, in which the opponents are not simply coerced, but their system or government is disintegrated and falls apart as a result of massive noncooperation and defiance. The sources of power are restricted or severed by the noncooperation to such an extreme degree that the opponents' system or government simply dissolves.

Economic shut-down: A suspension of the economic activities of a city, area, or country on a sufficient scale to produce economic paralysis. The motives are usually political.

This may be achieved with a general strike by workers while management, business, commercial institutions, and small shopkeepers close their establishments and halt their economic activities.

Freedom (political): A political condition that permits freedom of choice and action for individuals and also for individuals and groups to participate in the decisions and operation of the society and the political system.

Grand strategy: The broadest conception of how an objective is to be attained in a conflict by a chosen course of action. The grand strategy serves to coordinate and direct all appropriate and available resources (human, political, economic, moral, etc.) of the group to attain its objectives in a conflict.

Several more limited strategies may be applied within a grand strategy to achieve particular objectives in subordinate phases of the overall struggle.

Grievance group: The general population group whose grievances are issues in the conflict, and are being championed by the nonviolent resisters.

Human resources: A term that is used here to indicate the number of persons and groups who obey "the ruler" (meaning the ruling group in command of the state), cooperate with, or assist the ruling group in implementing their will. This includes the proportion of such persons and groups in the general population, and the extent, forms, and independence of their organizations.

A ruler's power is affected by the availability of these human resources, which constitute one of the sources of political power.

Material resources: This is another source of political power. The term refers to property, natural resources, financial resources, the economic system, means of communication, and modes of transportation. The degree to which the ruler controls, or does not control, these helps to determine the extent or limits of the ruler's power.

Mechanisms of change: The processes by which change is achieved in successful cases of nonviolent struggle. The four mechanisms are conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, and disintegration.

Methods: The specific means of action within the technique of non-violent action. Nearly two hundred specific methods have thus far

been identified. They are classed under three main classes: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation (social, economic, and political), and nonviolent intervention.

Noncooperation: A large class of methods of nonviolent action that involve deliberate restriction, discontinuance, or withholding of social, economic, or political cooperation (or a combination of these) with a disapproved person, activity, institution, or regime.

The methods of noncooperation are classified in the subcategories of social noncooperation, economic noncooperation (economic boycotts and labor strikes), and political noncooperation.

Nonviolence (religious or ethical): Beliefs and behavior of several types in which violent acts are prohibited on religious or ethical grounds. In some belief systems, not only physical violence is barred but also hostile thoughts and words. Certain belief systems additionally enjoin positive attitudes and behavior toward opponents, or even a rejection of the concept of opponents.

Such believers often may participate in nonviolent struggles with people practicing nonviolent struggle for pragmatic reasons, or may choose not to do so.

Nonviolent action: A general technique of conducting protest, resistance, and intervention without physical violence.

Such action may be conducted by (a) acts of omission—that is, the participants refuse to perform acts that they usually perform, are expected by custom to perform, or are required by law or regulation to perform; or (b) acts of commission—that is, the participants perform acts that they usually do not perform, are not expected by custom to perform, or are forbidden by law or regulation from performing; or (c) a combination of both.

The technique includes a multitude of specific methods that are grouped into three main classes: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

Nonviolent coercion: A mechanism of change in nonviolent action in which demands are achieved against the will of the opponents because effective control of the situation has been taken away from them by widespread noncooperation and defiance. However, the opponents still remain in their official positions and the system has not yet disintegrated.

Nonviolent insurrection: A popular political uprising against an established regime regarded as oppressive by use of massive non-cooperation and defiance.

Nonviolent intervention: A large class of methods of nonviolent action that in a conflict situation directly interfere by nonviolent means with the opponents' activities and operation of their system. These methods are distinguished from both symbolic protests and noncooperation. The disruptive intervention is most often physical (as in a sit-in) but may be psychological, social, economic, or political.

Nonviolent protest and persuasion: A large class of methods of non-violent action that are symbolic acts expressing opposition opinions or attempting persuasion (as vigils, marches or picketing). These acts extend beyond verbal expressions of opinion but stop short of noncooperation (as a strike) and nonviolent intervention (as a sit-in).

Nonviolent struggle: The waging of determined conflict by strong forms of nonviolent action, especially against determined and resourceful opponents who may respond with repression.

Nonviolent weapons: The specific methods of nonviolent action.

Pillars of support: The institutions and sections of the society that supply the existing regime with the needed sources of power to maintain and expand its power capacity.

Examples are the police, prisons, and military forces supplying sanctions, moral and religious leaders supplying authority (legitimacy), labor groups and business and investment groups supplying economic resources, and similarly with the other identified sources of political power.

Political defiance: The strategic application of nonviolent struggle in order to disintegrate a dictatorship and to replace it with a democratic system.

This resistance by noncooperation and defiance mobilizes the power of the oppressed population in order to restrict and cut off the sources of the dictatorship's power. Those sources are provided by groups and institutions called "pillars of support."

When political defiance is used successfully, it can make a nation ungovernable by the current or any future dictatorship and therefore able to preserve a democratic system against possible new threats.

Political jiu-jitsu: A special process that may operate during a nonviolent struggle to change power relationships. In political jiu-jitsu negative reactions to the opponents' violent repression against nonviolent resisters is turned to operate politically against the opponents, weakening their power position and strengthening that of the nonviolent resisters. This can operate only when violent repression is met with continued nonviolent defiance, not violence or surrender. The opponents' repression is then seen in the worst possible light.

Resulting shifts of opinion are likely to occur among third parties, the general grievance group, and even the opponents' usual supporters. Those shifts may produce both withdrawal of support for the opponents and increased support for the nonviolent resisters. The result may be widespread condemnation of the opponents, internal opposition among the opponents, and increased resistance. These changes can at times produce major shifts in power relationships in favor of the nonviolent struggle group.

Political jiu-jitsu does not operate in all cases of nonviolent

struggle. When it is absent the shift of power relationships depends highly on the extent of noncooperation.

Political power: The totality of influences and pressures available for use to determine and implement official policies for a society. Political power may be wielded by the institutions of government, or in opposition to the government by dissident groups and organizations. Political power may be directly applied in a conflict, or it may be held as a reserve capacity for possible later use.

Sanctions: Punishments or reprisals, violent or nonviolent, imposed either because people have failed to act in the expected or desired manner or because people have acted in an unexpected or prohibited manner.

Nonviolent sanctions are less likely than violent ones to be simple reprisals for disobedience and are more likely to be intended to achieve a given objective. Sanctions are a source of political power.

Self-reliance: The capacity to manage one's own affairs, make one's own judgments, and provide for oneself, one's group or organization, independence, self-determination, and self-sufficiency.

Skills and knowledge: A source of political power. The ruler's power is supported by the skills, knowledge and abilities that are provided by persons and groups in the society (human resources) and the relation of those available skills, knowledge and abilities to the ruler's needs for them.

Sources of power: These are origins of political power. They include: authority, human resources, skills and knowledge, intangible factors, material resources and sanctions. These derive from the society. Each of these sources is closely associated with and dependent upon the acceptance, cooperation, and obedience of the population and the society's institutions. With a strong supply of these sources the ruler will be powerful. As the supply is weakened or severed, the ruler's power will weaken or collapse.

Strategic nonviolent struggle: Nonviolent struggle that is applied according to a strategic plan that has been prepared on the basis of analysis of the conflict situation, the strengths and weaknesses of the contending groups, the nature, capacities, and requirements of the technique of nonviolent action, and especially strategic principles of that type of struggle. See also: grand strategy, strategy, tactics, and methods.

Strategy: A plan for the conduct of a major phase, or campaign, within a grand strategy for the overall conflict. A strategy is the basic idea of how the struggle of a specific campaign shall develop, and how its separate components shall be fitted together to contribute most advantageously to achieve its objectives.

Strategy operates within the scope of the grand strategy. Tactics and specific methods of action are used in smaller scale operations to implement the strategy for a specific campaign.

Strike: A deliberate restriction or suspension of work, usually temporarily, to put pressure on employers to achieve an economic objective or sometimes on the government in order to win a political objective.

Tactic: A limited plan of action based on a conception of how, in a restricted phase of a conflict, to use effectively the available means of action to achieve a specific limited objective. Tactics are intended for use in implementing a wider strategy in a phase of the overall conflict.

Violence: Physical violence against other human beings that inflicts injury or death, or threatens to inflict such violence, or any act dependent on such infliction or threat.

Some types of religious or ethical nonviolence conceive of violence much more broadly. This narrower definition permits adherents to those beliefs to cooperate with persons and groups that are prepared on pragmatic grounds to practice nonviolent struggle.

APPENDIX TWO

198 METHODS OF NONVIOLENT ACTION

The Methods of Nonviolent Protest and Persuasion

The following 198 methods of nonviolent action have all been used in historical instances of nonviolent struggle. Definitions of these methods and examples are provided in Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*.⁷

Formal Statements

1. Public speeches
2. Letters of opposition or support
3. Declarations by organizations and institutions
4. Signed public statements
5. Declarations of indictment and intention
6. Group or mass petitions

Communications with a Wider Audience

7. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
8. Banners, posters, and displayed communications
9. Leaflets, pamphlets, and books
10. Newspapers and journals
11. Records, radio, and television
12. Skywriting and earthwriting

Group Representations

13. Deputations
14. Mock awards
15. Group lobbying
16. Picketing
17. Mock elections

⁷Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973 and later editions.

Symbolic Public Acts

18. Displays of flags and symbolic colors
19. Wearing of symbols
20. Prayer and worship
21. Delivering symbolic objects
22. Protest disrobing
23. Destruction of own property
24. Symbolic lights
25. Displays of portraits
26. Paint as protest
27. New signs and names
28. Symbolic sounds
29. Symbolic reclamations
30. Rude gestures

Pressures on Individuals

31. “Haunting” officials
32. Taunting officials
33. Fraternization
34. Vigils

Drama and Music

35. Humorous skits and pranks
36. Performances of plays and music
37. Singing

Processions

38. Marches
39. Parades
40. Religious processions
41. Pilgrimages
42. Motorcades

Honoring the Dead

- 43. Political mourning
- 44. Mock funerals
- 45. Demonstrative funerals
- 46. Homage at burial places

Public Assemblies

- 47. Assemblies of protest or support
- 48. Protest meetings
- 49. Camouflaged meetings of protest
- 50. Teach-ins

Withdrawal and Renunciation

- 51. Walk-outs
- 52. Silence
- 53. Renouncing honors
- 54. Turning one's back

The Methods of Noncooperation

Social Noncooperation

Ostracism of Persons

- 55. Social boycott
- 56. Selective social boycott
- 57. Lysistratic nonaction
- 58. Excommunication
- 59. Interdict

Noncooperation with Social Events, Customs, and Institutions

60. Suspension of social and sports activities
61. Boycott of social affairs
62. Student strike
63. Social disobedience
64. Withdrawal from social institutions

Withdrawal from the Social System

65. Stay-at-home
66. Total personal noncooperation
67. "Flight" of workers
68. Sanctuary
69. Collective disappearance
70. Protest emigration (*hijrat*)

Economic Noncooperation: Economic Boycotts

Actions by Consumers

71. Consumers' boycott
72. Nonconsumption of boycotted goods
73. Policy of austerity
74. Rent withholding
75. Refusal to rent
76. National consumers' boycott
77. International consumers' boycott

Action by Workers and Producers

78. Workmen's boycott
79. Producers' boycott

Action by Middlemen

80. Suppliers' and handlers' boycott

Action by Owners and Management

81. Traders' boycott
82. Refusal to let or sell property
83. Lockout
84. Refusal of industrial assistance
85. Merchants' "general strike"

Action by Holders of Financial Resources

86. Withdrawal of bank deposits
87. Refusal to pay fees, dues, and assessments
88. Refusal to pay debts or interest
89. Severance of funds and credit
90. Revenue refusal
91. Refusal of a government's money

Action by Governments

92. Domestic embargo
93. Blacklisting of traders
94. International sellers' embargo
95. International buyers' embargo
96. International trade embargo

Economic Noncooperation: The Strike

Symbolic Strikes

97. Protest strike
98. Quickie walkout (lightning strike)

Agricultural Strikes

99. Peasant strike
100. Farm Workers' strike

Strikes by Special Groups

101. Refusal of impressed labor
102. Prisoners' strike
103. Craft strike
104. Professional strike

Ordinary Industrial Strikes

105. Establishment strike
106. Industry strike
107. Sympathetic strike

Restricted Strikes

108. Detailed strike
109. Bumper strike
110. Slowdown strike
111. Working-to-rule strike
112. Reporting "sick" (sick-in)
113. Strike by resignation
114. Limited strike
115. Selective strike

Multi-Industry Strikes

116. Generalized strike
117. General strike

Combination of Strikes and Economic Closures

118. Hartal
119. Economic shutdown

Political Noncooperation

Rejection of Authority

120. Withholding or withdrawal of allegiance
121. Refusal of public support
122. Literature and speeches advocating resistance

Citizens' Noncooperation with Government

123. Boycott of legislative bodies
124. Boycott of elections
125. Boycott of government employment and positions
126. Boycott of government depts., agencies, and other bodies
127. Withdrawal from government educational institutions
128. Boycott of government-supported organizations
129. Refusal of assistance to enforcement agents
130. Removal of own signs and placemarks
131. Refusal to accept appointed officials
132. Refusal to dissolve existing institutions

Citizens' Alternatives to Obedience

133. Reluctant and slow compliance
134. Nonobedience in absence of direct supervision
135. Popular nonobedience
136. Disguised disobedience
137. Refusal of an assemblage or meeting to disperse

138. Sit-down
139. Noncooperation with conscription and deportation
140. Hiding, escape, and false identities
141. Civil disobedience of “illegitimate” laws

Action by Government Personnel

142. Selective refusal of assistance by government aides
143. Blocking of lines of command and information
144. Stalling and obstruction
145. General administrative noncooperation
146. Judicial noncooperation
147. Deliberate inefficiency and selective noncooperation by enforcement agents
148. Mutiny

Domestic Governmental Action

149. Quasi-legal evasions and delays
150. Noncooperation by constituent governmental units

International Governmental Action

151. Changes in diplomatic and other representations
152. Delay and cancellation of diplomatic events
153. Withholding of diplomatic recognition
154. Severance of diplomatic relations
155. Withdrawal from international organizations
156. Refusal of membership in international bodies
157. Expulsion from international organizations

The Methods of Nonviolent Intervention

Psychological Intervention

158. Self-exposure to the elements
159. The fast
 - a) Fast of moral pressure
 - b) Hunger strike
 - c) Satyagrahic fast
160. Reverse trial
161. Nonviolent harassment

Physical Intervention

162. Sit-in
163. Stand-in
164. Ride-in
165. Wade-in
166. Mill-in
167. Pray-in
168. Nonviolent raids
169. Nonviolent air raids
170. Nonviolent invasion
171. Nonviolent interjection
172. Nonviolent obstruction
173. Nonviolent occupation

Social Intervention

174. Establishing new social patterns
175. Overloading of facilities
176. Stall-in
177. Speak-in
178. Guerrilla theater
179. Alternative social institutions
180. Alternative communication system

Economic Intervention

181. Reverse strike
182. Stay-in strike
183. Nonviolent land seizure
184. Defiance of blockades
185. Politically motivated counterfeiting
186. Preclusive purchasing
187. Seizure of assets
188. Dumping
189. Selective patronage
190. Alternative markets
191. Alternative transportation systems
192. Alternative economic institutions

Political Intervention

193. Overloading of administrative systems
194. Disclosing identities of secret agents
195. Seeking imprisonment
196. Civil disobedience of “neutral” laws
197. Work-on without collaboration
198. Dual sovereignty and parallel government

Without doubt, a large number of additional methods have already been used but have not been classified, and a multitude of additional methods will be invented in the future that have the characteristics of the three classes of methods: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation, and nonviolent intervention.

It must be clearly understood that the greatest effectiveness is possible when individual methods to be used are selected to implement the previously adopted strategy. It is necessary to know what kind of pressures are to be used before one chooses the precise forms of action that will best apply those pressures.

APPENDIX THREE

FOR FURTHER READING

Peter Ackerman and Jack Duvall, *A Force More Powerful: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Praeger, 1994.

Ronald McCarthy and Gene Sharp, with Brad Bennett, *Nonviolent Action: A Research Guide*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1994.

Gene Sharp and Bruce Jenkins, *The Anti-Coup*. Boston, Massachusetts: Albert Einstein Institution, 2003.

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Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*. Bangkok: Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma, 1993. Also, Boston, Massachusetts: Albert Einstein Institution, 2002.

Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973. Now available only in three paperback volumes.

Gene Sharp. "The Role of Power in Nonviolent Struggle." Cambridge, Massachusetts: Albert Einstein Institution, 1990.

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Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: Twentieth Century Practice and Twenty-First Century Potential*. Forthcoming 2003.

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Chapter Two, "The Importance of Strategic Planning in Nonviolent Struggle" has not been previously published in this form.

Chapter Three, "Steps In Strategic Planning for Nonviolent Struggles Against Repressive Regimes" is a revision of a paper presented at a conference of the United States Institute of Peace and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict at Aerlie House in Warrenton, Virginia, 9 January 2002, in cooperation with Freedom House.

Appendix One, "Glossary of Important Terms in Nonviolent Struggle," has been selected from a far larger manuscript by Gene Sharp on terminology and definitions in the field of nonviolent struggle and tangential subjects, that at this date (2003) is still in progress.

Appendix Two, “198 Methods of Nonviolent Action” is based on Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part Two, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973 and later editions. That book contains detailed definitions, discussions, and examples of each method. A text similar to this chapter was issued as a leaflet by the Albert Einstein Institution in the 1990s and reproduced in several languages including Thai and Russian.

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